

sanctions by June 2 in response to Russia's chemical weapons attack and poisoning of Alexei Navalny. This deadline has passed.

The Trump administration regularly missed congressionally mandated deadlines. I think back to the Skripal attack and how President Trump delayed a decision for months. However, I expect better from this administration. President Biden and his team must announce these sanctions this week, for Putin has shown no remorse for these vile actions, and Russia has taken no steps to rectify them.

A democracy- and human rights-centered foreign policy also means countering corruption, so I welcome the White House initiative announced last week. Since January, we have seen the President back up this commitment by imposing sanctions on corrupt actors from Bulgaria, to Albania, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. But, moving forward, we must do more to focus this tool on Russia, the primary source of so much of the corruption we see around the world.

The most effective sanction on Putin's inner circle of oligarchs is to deny them and their families access to the West. We must cut off their ability to travel and use the Western financial system to funnel the assets they systematically have stolen from the Russian people over the course of several decades.

Alexei Navalny and others, like the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, have done excellent work exposing Putin and his cronies. The U.S. Department of the Treasury and the European Union should evaluate their research and chart a course for action.

We must also directly engage with the Russian people and make clear that our problems are not with them but their government. I urge President Biden to make a direct appeal to the Russian people over YouTube, communicate our views and concerns to the Russian people, and provide his vision for what a positive U.S.-Russia relationship could look like. The United States should also increase exchange programs with Russia, assuming the Russian Government would allow its people to participate.

Unfortunately, everyday Russians' access to fact-based information and reporting is dwindling in the face of Kremlin crackdowns on journalism and pervasive propaganda. I am especially outraged by the Russian Government's decision to label Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Russia as a foreign agent, subject to fines and to being kicked out of the country, all for supporting Russian journalists who report on the truth—a commodity in short supply in Russia these days. These actions are disgraceful. And it is worth noting that, as legitimate news sources like Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty come under fire in Russia, Kremlin propaganda arms like RT and Sputnik continue to operate freely here in the

United States. We allow them to freely operate, but they are Russia state-sponsored enterprises. Perhaps it is time we reconsider how easily the Kremlin can disseminate disinformation to the American people.

Meanwhile, several Americans remain unjustly detained in Russia, including Paul Whelan and Trevor Reed. The Kremlin's Kafka-esque treatment of American citizens must stop, and President Biden should make their return a priority of the visit.

Finally, our Embassy presence in Moscow faces increasing, growing pressure from the Russian authorities as they seek to restrict visas for Embassy staff. This has to stop. In my view, if Russian diplomats' visas expire here in the United States, then they must leave. Extensions should only be granted when we see reciprocity on the Russian side. No more games. We have tolerated Kremlin abuse of this process for too long, and it has to stop.

In the short time I have stood on this floor today, I have provided but a glimpse of some of the most challenging issues facing the U.S.-Russia relationship, most of which were ignored by the previous administration. President Biden has to correct course and forcefully press these matters in Geneva. However, there is one area that demands real negotiation with Moscow: the issue of arms control.

I supported the extension of the New START treaty. It advances U.S. interests, constrains Russia's strategic nuclear forces, requires stringent verification to ensure Russia meets its commitments, and affords us the flexibility needed to maintain a safe, secure, modern, and effective nuclear deterrent.

The question is, With New START extended, where do we go from here? I agree with President Biden that establishing a strategic stability dialogue with a country capable of destroying the United States is essential.

Russia continues to pursue new destabilizing nuclear systems and actively threaten our allies with shorter range nuclear weapons. However, we cannot view this challenge solely through a military lens. Diplomacy must lead our efforts to reduce nuclear tensions going forward, and this summit would be a good place to start.

Last week, in the Washington Post, former Ambassador to Russia Mike McFaul wrote that the Biden administration "cannot freeze U.S.-Russia relations in place to focus on the greater challenge of China."

I believe he is right. Addressing one challenge cannot come at the expense of other critical U.S. interests.

Whether we like it or not, the Kremlin clearly sees the United States as its primary adversary and remains intent on challenging us at every turn. Past administrations have tried to ignore or minimize the threat. It doesn't work. We need an assertive and comprehensive strategy, one that holds the Kremlin accountable and even puts them on their heels from time to time.

The United States of America always aspires to have a stable, predictable relationship with every country around the world. But stable and predictable partners do not use chemical weapons to wipe out their political opposition. Stable and political partners do not tear chunks of territory from their neighbors. Stable and political partners don't commit war crimes in places like Syria. Vladimir Putin has been President for 20 years now. After all this time, we know what we are dealing with; it is not a stable and predictable partner. We are dealing with a mafia state run by a vicious authoritarian and his inner circle of corrupt oligarchs, not a normal country. We are dealing with a criminal enterprise, not a democratic government. And as President Biden knows, and has said, when it comes to Putin, we are dealing with a ruthless killer. We should act accordingly.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. ROSEN). The Senator from Iowa.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Ms. ERNST. Madam President, you might have missed it, but without much fanfare, the White House quietly released the President's budget on the Friday before a holiday weekend. Maybe we weren't supposed to notice the plan at all, but the contents make it impossible to ignore.

President Biden is proposing higher taxes on working Americans and cuts to our national defense to pay for a massive expansion of the Federal Government, an enactment of the radical progressive demands, like parts of the Green New Deal.

What can't be paid for is simply put on the Nation's "credit card," adding trillions of dollars of red ink. President Biden's budget can be summed up like this: higher taxes, higher spending, and higher debt.

And don't take my word for it. The New York Times wrote that Biden's \$6 trillion budget would "push federal spending to its highest sustained levels since World War II."

Under the Biden budget, by 2028, Washington will collect more tax revenue as a portion of our economy than at nearly any point over the last 100 years. This tax-collecting scheme even includes a retroactive tax increase. That is right, folks, you may owe higher taxes on past earnings.

Plus, the President would allow the tax cuts for lower income and middle-class Americans to expire in 2025, and the result will be higher taxes for most Americans. Higher tax bills will add additional burdens to Iowa families and small businesses already struggling with the rising prices and inflation being caused by Bidenomics.

So what do you get in exchange for all of these new taxes? For the first time in nearly half a century, taxpayers would be forced to pay for abortions. The Biden budget contains \$600 million for electric vehicles. That is a lot of money to subsidize a product

very few Americans, other than upper income individuals on the coasts, seem interested in purchasing.

President Biden would also spend your taxes to double the size of the IRS over the next decade, adding almost 87,000 new employees at a cost of nearly \$80 billion. You heard it right, folks—87,000 new IRS agents.

But while the Biden budget promises a bureaucratic buildup at the IRS, his proposal is far less generous to our Armed Forces. The Air Force would suffer a substantial cut in its number of aircraft. The small number of new ships added to the Navy will not keep pace with the growth of Communist China's shipbuilding. This is especially concerning since the CCP now boasts the world's largest Navy and is attempting to expand its naval presence in the Atlantic. You heard that right—not the Pacific but into the Atlantic.

The Army budget would be slashed by more than \$3 billion. The resulting troop reductions would leave us with the same sized Army we had on 9/11. While essentially freezing defense spending overall, \$617 million of the military's budget would be diverted to fighting climate change.

Folks, who does the President think he will be able to call on should we need to fight off foreign threats—his new Army of IRS agents?

We face new threats around the globe, and lowering our defenses, as President Biden is proposing, will only embolden our adversaries. Americans may fear an IRS audit, but Red China won't.

When America last spent as much as President Biden is proposing, we built, essentially from scratch, the world's greatest military force. And all Americans were called on to play their part in the most noble of causes.

The entire free world will forever owe a debt of gratitude to the "greatest generation." There is no denying that the sacrifices made by these Americans and the resources committed to their mission forever altered human history for the better. The same cannot be said about what is now being proposed, which leaves America weaker in the world, and the debt will be paid by future generations.

The Biden budget is a bust for taxpayers and a boon for DC bureaucrats and tax collectors.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, as my colleague from Iowa just said, something mysterious happened just before the holiday weekend when the budget was released. So just before Memorial Day, the administration released its long-awaited fiscal year 2022 budget proposal.

Having reviewed the proposal, it is obvious why they chose this timing to do it—because they hoped most Americans would be too distracted by their backyard barbecues and tributes to fallen heroes to even notice how out-

landish this budget proposal is. Thank God, Presidents only propose, Congress disposes because we have the power of the purse.

I have bad news for my Democratic colleagues about the release of this; that the American public won't have the wool pulled over their eyes as easily as this administration thinks so by putting this out late Friday before the holiday weekend. Americans will see this budget for what it is, a very unserious political document containing a laundry list of liberal wish list policies unmoored from economic or fiscal reality. It would be funny if not for the very serious issues we currently face in our country, and this budget makes them worse.

In response to the pandemic, Congress understandably took bold actions to help individuals keep the roof over their head and to help small businesses keep their lights on. As a result, our national debt exploded because of the pandemic. It now exceeds the entire output of our economy, and this budget is going to make that situation even worse.

As we enter the postpandemic world, we need to address the very real issues about rising debt and deficits posing for our country over the long term. Otherwise, to quote the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, "a growing debt burden could increase the risk of a fiscal crisis and higher inflation as well as undermine confidence in the U.S. dollar."

The President's budget completely ignores potential fiscal and economic challenges that we all know are on the horizon. Taking the concept of "never letting a crisis go to waste" to a whole new level, the Biden budget would put our country in a permanent crisis mode in terms of spending and debt levels.

In 2009, at the height of the financial crisis, the government spending peaked at 24.4 percent of GDP. Now, spending proposed under President Biden's budget would average even higher at 24.5 percent over the next decade. So what we had peaked in the 2009 year of the financial crisis is going to be just common for the whole next decade, and that is bad.

Moreover, the President's budget would set a new record for the debt as a share of the economy. According to the President's own rosy assumptions, debt as a percentage of GDP would reach 112 percent next year, shattering the World War II record of 106 percent of GDP. And by 2031, debt as a share of our economy would hit 117 percent of GDP. So how extraordinary a step this budget takes. At a time when inflation has been rearing its head, proposing sustained spending and debt at these levels is playing with fire, like pouring gasoline on a fire.

Even long-term Democrat economists and Obama administration alums, Larry Summer and Jason Furman, have begun to sound the inflation alarm. The President would be well-advised to start taking notice when lead-

ing economists like these two point to the dangers of inflation.

As problematic as the spending side of the budget is—and so far that is the only part I have covered—we now go to the tax side, and the tax side is equally dangerous. The President proposes enacting the largest tax increase in history.

Incredibly, even with the \$3.6 trillion in new taxes he proposes, his budget still doesn't come close to putting our national debt on a sustainable path given the new spending. This shows his tax cuts aren't about fiscal responsibility. Instead, they are about punishing success and redistributing wealth.

Ultimately, this will prove disastrous for the economy and, of course, it is going to affect all Americans. Job-killing tax hikes will slow economic growth. These tax hikes will reduce business investment, and these tax hikes will result in lower wages and fewer jobs over the long run. As a result, then, the middle class is likely to suffer the most.

Higher taxes, excessive spending, and escalating debt are not a recipe for our economy to "Build Back Better," those famous words of this President's economic program—"Build Back Better." Instead, they are just a recipe for government to "Build Bureaucracy Better" and at the expense of hard-working Americans.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. PORTMAN. Madam President, I am here to join my colleague from Iowa who just spoke and others to talk about the President's budget.

The budget is comprised of a couple of things. One is what the spending is going to be for the country. The spending, which is unbelievably high and at unprecedented levels of spending at a time of unprecedented deficits and a long-term debt that is at the highest level ever, is concerning.

The second is that the budget is about revenue. So on the spending side, we all expected it to be a very high number—over \$6 trillion in new spending—but on the tax side, we also have huge new tax increases. The Senator from Iowa just said it is the largest tax increase in the history of the country. He is the former chairman of the tax-writing committee, chairman of the Budget Committee here, and he has been through a lot of tax increases over the years. This is the largest one in the history of the country. It is coming at a time when you don't want to raise taxes because we are coming out of this pandemic, trying to get the economy back on track.

One reason that we were in good shape before COVID-19 is because we actually put in place some tax reforms and some tax cuts that really worked. Let's be very specific about that. In the months just before COVID-19 hit, we had an economy that was hitting on all cylinders in every respect.

In February of that year—so February before the COVID-19 crisis hit—we had the 19th straight month of wage growth of over 3 percent. That was great news in my home State of Ohio, I will tell you, because we had years of flat-rate growth, even declining growth, when you take into account the effects of inflation. So we had really nice wage growth.

And guess who was made the beneficiary of that wage growth. It was lower and middle-income workers, which is also something you would all think people would hope for in this Chamber. That was partly because the tax cuts the government put in place in 2018 from the 2017 Republican bill provided tax relief to middle-class families, doubled the standard deduction, doubled the child tax credit, lowered the tax rates, and put more money into people's pockets. And the 2017 reforms also spurred needed investment in our communities, growing economic opportunities, particularly in low-income neighborhoods.

And the reforms on the corporate side—on the international side and on the corporate side—generally meant that more companies were investing in America, creating more jobs and investments here rather than overseas.

At the time, the Congressional Budget Office did an analysis of the lower corporate rate, as an example, and said that 70 percent of that benefit was going to go to workers in terms of their wages and salaries. That is exactly what we saw. So, again, there were 19 straight months of wage growth of over 3 percent in February before COVID hit.

By the way, also in that time period—the year before COVID hit—we had the lowest poverty rate in the history of the country. Let me repeat that because I think it would be a surprise for a lot of people to hear this who are so critical of the tax reforms in 2017 on the other side of the aisle, saying this is not going to help ordinary people. Of course, it did.

We talked about the wage growth, but also the lowest poverty rate in the history of our country. We also saw a 50-year low in unemployment. We saw record low unemployment among certain groups of Americans, including Hispanics, Blacks, and Asian Americans.

We also saw a situation where there were a lot of jobs being created that were higher wage jobs because wages were going up, and we had the kind of opportunity economy that everybody in this Chamber should hope for.

What is this budget saying? This is the budget, again, that President Biden has just put out. He has said: Let's get rid of all that tax reform and those tax cuts. Virtually, every one of the 2017 tax cuts expires under his budget or is ended now before it would normally expire. Let me repeat that: The budget that they put out wants to increase taxes, and that includes taxes on everybody, including the middle class. In

only a few months in office, the Biden Administration is committed to spending about \$6 trillion.

Again, just put this in context. That is bigger than the annual budget of the United States. When you add up all the plans the President has put out there, it is \$6 trillion in new spending. One of the problems with that has been that it has primed the pump. In other words, it put so much stimulus into the economy that it has created inflation. That was something that was warned by Republicans, including me and others, but also Democrats, like Larry Summers, who is a Democrat, an economist, and former Secretary of the Treasury.

Unfortunately, it looks like that prediction was correct because inflation is up. If you ask folks back home about it, they will say: Yeah, I went to the gas pump, and it was \$3.50 a gallon.

That is what I heard last weekend. That is what I experienced myself. Also, it is the price of food.

Certainly, it is the price of materials. If you are trying to build something today and you want to buy some plywood, good luck. The costs have skyrocketed.

This inflation is real and it is happening, and people are feeling it. In a way, that is a hidden tax, isn't it? If everything costs more, it is sort of a regressive tax that is built into the system. That is what is happening when we have inflation. We are also seeing pressure on interest rates, of course, which is going to make it harder on people to buy a home, buy a car, to be able to get by.

This \$6 trillion has made a difference in the sense of sending a message out from the Democrats that we would like to spend much more, but they already did spend quite a bit that has primed the pump—\$1.4 trillion in a COVID package, as an example.

By the way, that \$6 trillion, when you add it up, is about six times more than the government spent in response to the Great Depression. That is adjusted for inflation. I am talking about inflation-adjusted terms. It is about six times more than the government spent in the 1930s in the Great Depression.

It is a very radical budget, really, both on the spending side and on the tax side. The philosophy of more and more spending at a time of record debt and record deficits isn't going to help our economy recover. I think it is simply going to drive inflation, as we talked about, put pressure on interest rates, keep people out of jobs, and put more financial pressure on everyday Americans.

Instead, what we ought to do is help people get back to work. COVID-19, thank God, is finally passing. In my own State of Ohio, we are finally opening up again because our COVID-19 rates are so low. The vaccines are working. I encourage people who haven't been vaccinated to step forward and do it because it helps you and your family and also our communities to be able to recover more quickly—get

people back to work and back to school, get our children back to school and get back to our churches and our synagogues, and get back to our normal life. It is starting to happen, and it is exciting.

One of the problems is, again, higher inflation, higher interest rates, and also that there just aren't adequate workers out there, in part, because the government is paying more and more for unemployment insurance—\$300 in Federal supplement on top of the normal unemployment in the States. There are still 25 States that have that, and this means that people often are making more on unemployment than they would be making at work. On average, about 42 percent of people, with the additional \$300, are making more on unemployment than they were at work. That creates a little disincentive.

There are other disincentives, too, out there to go back to work. As a result, there are 9.3 million jobs open in America. That is the latest figure from the Department of Labor based on the April numbers. We don't have the May numbers yet, but 9.3 million is a record number of job openings in America. We never had this many jobs open.

This is a problem because if you don't get people back to work and filling these jobs, some of these companies are going to downsize. Some will leave our shores for elsewhere, where they can find workers. Others, frankly, are automating. You could argue that may be a more efficient, economic decision, but I don't like to see that. I don't like to see that. I think the technology and the automation, where appropriate, are great, but I want to see people get jobs where they get the dignity and self-respect that comes from working, and they get the opportunity to have a fulfilling life with work.

So 9.3 million jobs are open. Let's fill those jobs. Let's not do this incredibly high spending level talked about in this budget. Let's not raise these taxes at a time when we are finally seeing economies start to rebound after COVID-19. Let's get back on track. We had a great economy—an opportunity economy—before COVID-19. That is what we want to return to.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Indiana.

Mr. BRAUN. Madam President, I come here, probably more than any other Senator, on this topic of budgets, and it ought to be called the "lack of budgets."

Thank goodness that, currently, we have the blueprint out there in black and white for what we intend to do—for what the President intends to do, and he is going to try to sell it to the American public.

We have been on this pathway for decades. During the Reagan years, we talked about enlivening the economy, bringing taxes down, letting people keep more of their own resources. That worked. I think that still makes sense.

It works in most States. It was driving the economy with that dynamic pre-COVID.

But what we did lose along the way is that—regardless of our revenues, which stubbornly average 17 to 18 percent of our GDP—when you raise rates, people don't produce as much. There is not as much income to tax. When you lower them, you get more revenue to tax, and you actually are gaining more revenue for the government, to boot. So we were there pre-COVID. We only need to look to see what was working just 1½ or 2 years ago. It was the best the economy was doing.

It was raising wages. We always should be interested in doing that but not through government—through the productive private economy. It was raising it in places that we had never been able to do it before. So rather than throw that blueprint out the door and go with something like this that has never worked in the past, whenever you get government becoming that large a part of your economy—and it used to be 20 percent. Even though we were only taking in 17 to 18 percent, regardless of the tax rates in our own government revenue, we got used to running deficits. That is what happened decades ago, and we have all gotten used to it. If you want to see a budget that takes the theory that it doesn't make any difference how much more you spend than you take in, this is it. If you like it, it is the best budget we have ever done.

Again, we shouldn't be calling it a budget because budgets mean that you live within your means from year to year like all other entities do. State governments do it and some that don't generally have issues in their own States' economies, but we cannot take all of these resources from the private sector, run them through government with the inefficiency that goes along with that, and expect to have a good outcome.

Senator GRASSLEY was here earlier and Senator PORTMAN. They gave you a bunch of statistics. I am going to describe how this shipwreck ends up on the shore over time. It is just a question of how much we buy into this as the way we need to run our government, which has not worked over the last two decades—from the Gulf wars and from all of the stuff that we have tried to do through government for which we used to at least have pay-fors.

The biggest drivers of our current deficits nobody wants to talk about. They are Medicare and Social Security. We knew decades ago that the Social Security trust fund was going to go bust and that it is going to happen here in a little over a decade. Will we do anything to try to change it? That takes political will. I have been here a little under 2½ years and have not found a lot of that.

The bigger driver of our structural deficits would be a broken healthcare system. I, more than any other Sen-

ator, have talked about that—not solving it through more government but reforming healthcare to make it become a true industry that believes in transparency, competition, and getting the healthcare consumer involved. We can fix that part of it, but we can't get any interest even in my own party for much of that because we defend a broken healthcare industry. We don't ask it to be transparent, competitive, and engage the consumer like most other industries do and do well and that provide a good service to the American consumer.

So government will end up doing what it always does. It is so easy to borrow from others and to spend the money. You are going to have a sugar high. You are going to feel good, but there is going to be indigestion down the road. The way it is going to end up is we are going to have calamities within our credit markets, and we are going to have people no longer willing to lend us money.

We have now taken these trillion-dollar deficits, which are going to be closer to \$1.5 trillion, and this new budget—again, I hate even calling it a budget—is going to add to that, not lessen it. When you talk about raising revenues, there is even anxiety on the other side of the aisle because raising taxes never goes well. It is generally tough to get everybody to agree on it, and that means our deficits are going to be even larger.

Is it going to take our completely depleting the Social Security trust fund that we have been paying into since the thirties, and is it going to take depleting the Medicare trust fund, which now happens in 5½ years, and is the American public going to allow us here to keep spending more money than we take in year after year and end up where the Chinese won't lend us any money down the road? Others won't as well because our interest is going to be about as much as we pay for defense, and then you are going to have a calamity.

You can blame it on everyone here who thinks this feels good now. When you want to feel good in the future, you make hard decisions in the present. Any well-run organization or any well-run State or local government makes those tough decisions in the short run so they don't have to solve things through a calamity in the long run.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor to talk about our economy and link that to the budget that the President has introduced for our Nation going forward.

On Friday, the Department of Labor published its monthly jobs report. Just like the April jobs report, the May report is a cause for concern. There really wasn't any cause for celebration. Yet President Biden did exactly the same thing that he did in the previous

month after that disappointing jobs report—he declared victory. He gave a speech in Delaware, and he called it “historic progress.” Even the President of the United States is stretching the language of our Nation right here.

Let's look at the facts.

What is Joe Biden calling “historic progress”?

Over the last 2 months, about 850,000 fewer people were hired than the economists had predicted. In the month of May alone, 160,000 people left the labor force. The percentage of Americans in the labor force actually went down. Another month, another weak jobs report. It is disappointing but not surprising. We know why it has slowed down. President Biden and the Democrats have committed to paying millions of people more to stay home from work than to go to work. If you pay people more to not work than to work, that is what you are going to get. That is what they are being encouraged to do. In fact, I would say that these people are not being lazy; they are being logical with the incentives that the Democrats have put in front of them, which is money in their pockets to stay home from work.

There are 9.3 million jobs that are unfilled right now in the United States, a record high. As a result, small businesses—and I heard about it this weekend in Wyoming—are struggling to find people to work there. They are having a hard time finding people to take jobs. They have signs up: “Help Wanted.” “We Need You.” “Offering Incentives.” If people are getting paid more to not work than to work, that is what they are going to do.

At the same time, prices continue to rise. That is what I heard about as I was sitting, waiting to have my oil changed. It was a longer line than usual in Casper, not because we didn't have good workers but because we didn't have enough of them in a place that changed oil that had two bays set up but was down to one. They have to do that several days a week because they don't have the workforce. They can't find the people to change the oil. So it was a good townhall meeting as we sat around there, waiting for our oil to be changed, talking to people about their concerns. That is what we heard about: trouble finding workers, inflation.

Last week, the White House Press Secretary was asked about high gas prices—and I had heard about that in Wyoming as we were sitting around, waiting to get the oil changed: You know, it costs about \$15 or \$20 more to fill a tank than it did a year ago. People not only pay attention to how many dollars and cents it costs for a gallon of gas but how much it costs to fill the tank and how much less they have to spend for other things.

The White House Press Secretary said that gas prices aren't very high if you account for inflation.

If you account for inflation? It is inflation. Gas prices are high because it

is what happens when prices go up. That is inflation.

This should be a news flash for America. Inflation is the problem. The White House Press Secretary didn't seem to see the connection. It is caused by this administration. Gas prices have gone up about 70 cents a gallon in the last 4 months—since Joe Biden took the oath of office. It is no surprise when the President, on the day he takes the oath of office, paints a target on the back of American energy and pulls the trigger, which makes us more dependent on foreign sources of energy.

As the senior Senator from Alaska said in an Energy Committee hearing, we are, at this time in the United States, using more energy from Russia than we are from her home State of Alaska. That is a comment on the policies of this administration.

Summer is almost here, and the pandemic is almost over. What is going to happen with regard to the demand for gasoline? It is going to continue to go up.

There is a moratorium on the exploration of oil and gas in the United States, and we are making ourselves more dependent on foreign sources. What is the President doing? Imposing more taxes on American energy. Last week, he put more restrictions on the production of energy from Alaska. Now what does he want to do? Well, we have seen it in the Finance Committee right here. He wants to impose the increase of taxes on oil and gas producers. That is going to hurt the people who work in that industry, and it is going to make all of us pay more at the tank. This is basic economics. If you restrict the production of American oil and gas and if you raise the taxes on oil and gas, the prices people have to pay at the pump—the prices they pay to fill up their vehicles—are going to go up.

President Biden keeps declaring victory and keeps doubling down on policies that are slowing down the economy. Two weeks ago, he introduced his budget request for next year. To me, it is a blueprint for bankruptcy. He is proposing \$6 trillion in Federal spending for next year. During the pandemic, the country hit about \$4 trillion in annual Federal spending for the first time ever. This was during a national emergency, and we passed it in a bipartisan way with over 90 votes in the Senate. In five different coronavirus relief bills, we were able to deal with what needed to be done for our Nation at the time. The pandemic is behind us, and the President now wants to spend \$2 trillion more than that every year even after the pandemic is over. This is only the beginning.

The Biden budget doesn't even include some of the most expensive campaign promises he made when he was running for President. According to one estimate, the Biden budget is missing about \$1.5 trillion that he had promised to spend. It is not even included in the budget. What happens with all of this additional spending? Of

course, it is going to cause inflation because more money will be out there to chase the goods and services that are available.

President Biden also wants to bring back the death tax. This would be devastating for farmers and ranchers who want to keep their farms in their families. I heard about it this past weekend in Sheridan, WY, with the Wyoming Stock Growers Association. As for the families who have had the ranches or the farms in their families for over 100 years, we call them centennial families in Wyoming, and we celebrate them every year. They have all said, if this happens—if the Biden administration does this with what it wants to do with the death tax—when Grandma or Grandpa passes, every one of them is going to have to sell the farm just to pay the taxes. They have been able to keep them within the families for 100 years. Joe Biden is going to take the ax to them.

Get this. He wants to hire 87,000 more bureaucrats at the Internal Revenue Service. The Internal Revenue Service is the least accountable and most powerful Agency in the Federal Government. The Biden goal is to collect \$700 billion more from taxpayers. What does he want to do with the money? Use it for additional socialist spending. We have seen the list. Under the Biden agenda, working families are going to be paying more at the pump, more at the grocery store, and they are going to end up paying more as well through taxes. They are seeing it now. Our jobs reports, our inflation reports, our gas prices have all been disappointing to all Americans.

This is a direct result of the policies that are coming out of this administration and out of this White House. It is time for the President to stop the attacks on American energy, to stop paying people more to not work than to work, and to stop this irresponsible spending spree as outlined in the budget.

We know what works. Let's return to the policies that work, to the policies that have been giving us the best economy in a half a century. Just 16 months ago, we had low taxes, reasonable regulations, and more American energy. The economy was booming until the coronavirus hit. We need to get back to that again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

(The remarks of Mr. SCOTT of Florida pertaining to the introduction of S. 1990 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The junior Senator from Rhode Island.

249TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE "GASPEE" RAID

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I am here for one of my favorite days of the year on the Senate floor be-

cause today is the 249th anniversary of the Gaspee raid. I can only imagine what I am going to do next year when it is the 250th anniversary of the Gaspee raid. I may bring pyrotechnics onto the Senate floor, in violation of every rule.

The Gaspee raid is what Rhode Island abolitionist and writer Frances Whipple McDougall called the "first blood" drawn in America's struggle for independence, and I come every year to mark this important but overlooked event in American history.

Our typical history textbook tells us that the Boston Tea Party sparked the American Revolution in December of 1773. Remember that date: 1773, December. Massachusetts folks in Boston protested English taxation by pushing tea into Boston Harbor. It was a memorable protest. We ought to remember it. But we Rhode Islanders contend that a different spark 16 months earlier out on Narragansett Bay ignited the Revolution. The date was June 9, 1772, and the central players in this saga were two ships, one a little sloop, the Hannah, embarking from Newport for Providence, and the other a British customs schooner, the HMS Gaspee; hence the Gaspee raid. The Gaspee was under the command of Lieutenant William Dudingston of His Majesty's Royal Navy, patrolling Narragansett Bay.

The meeting of the Hannah and the Gaspee and the act of defiance that followed would be explosive.

Before I describe the encounter of the Hannah and the Gaspee, it is important to set the stage.

England's King George had overextended his empire during the Seven Years War, especially in the war's American theater known as the French and Indian War. The conflict was expensive to win, and by its end, Britain had taken on vast new territory and the cost of governing that territory, and the British national debt soon doubled.

Meanwhile, over the course of the 18th century, Rhode Island had become a prosperous, major distiller and distributor of rum and trader of goods. Now, the rum trade was a corrupt and immoral enterprise, a leg of which profited off the labor of enslaved Africans, but it was profitable, and the British were thirsty for customs duties. So the Crown tried to crack down on Rhode Island's trade, including its rum-running, to collect more customs revenue to pay down the King's debts.

King George's zeal for tax collecting in Narragansett Bay got a little out of hand. British officers started seizing cargo without evidence, leaving the cargo's owners with no recourse. They commandeered Rhode Islanders' ships on flimsy grounds and then used those commandeered ships to collect more customs duties. British authorities even pressed Colonial sailors into service, essentially kidnapping them and forcing them to work on the ships of the Crown.

In one incident in July 1764, the customs ship HMS St. John seized cargo and a brig in Newport Harbor. Rhode Islanders deemed this outright theft. The Governor, Stephen Hopkins, later a signer of the Declaration of Independence, ordered the arming of a sloop to go out and take on the St. John in open battle on the bay.

The British got wind of it, and they reinforced the St. John with the powerfully armed, if meekly named, HMS Squirrel. So the Rhode Islanders scrapped their plans for a naval battle and settled for firing on the St. John from fortifications on Goat Island with 13-pounder canons.

When the HMS Maidstone impressed into servitude an entire crew of colonists, Rhode Islanders carried one of Maidstone's boats that they were able to seize from Newport Harbor to the city commons and burned it, with hundreds of onlookers cheering.

The Royal Navy impounded prominent merchant John Hancock's sloop, the Liberty, in 1768. Even after the charges of illegal wine importation that had justified the seizure supposedly were dropped, the British Navy kept his ship and used it for themselves for more customs enforcement. The next year, colonists in Newport reclaimed the Liberty by force.

These simmering maritime hostilities set the backdrop for the fateful meeting of the Hannah and the Gaspee in 1772.

As the Hannah sailed north up the bay on June 9, the Gaspee intercepted her and ordered the crew to stop for a search. The Hannah's captain, Benjamin Lindsey, was having none of it, and he did not comply. He held his course and continued sailing north toward Providence.

Warning shots were fired from the Gaspee. Despite them, Lindsey continued on. His smaller and more maneuverable vessel led the bigger Gaspee up north toward Namquid Point. Well, the waters off Namquid Point shoal, and there are shallows off Namquid Point. Lindsey, as an experienced navigator and sailor in Narragansett Bay, knew this, and he sailed his Hannah over the shallows and kept on up to Providence. Behind them, the angry Gaspee came surging in chase and ground into the sand and stuck.

Aground off Pawtuxet Cove, the Gaspee would need to wait for the next high tide before it could float free. Night closed in on the Gaspee. There was no Moon. Lieutenant Dudingston and his crew were left to wait in darkness and exposed.

Captain Lindsey sailed the Hannah on up to Providence, and up in Providence, he immediately arranged a meeting of local patriots in a tavern called Sabin's Tavern, which still exists under another name today, in what is now the East Side of Providence, just below Brown University. Together, and no doubt after refreshments, the group decided to end the career of the Gaspee once and for all.

Several boatloads of Rhode Islanders, led by John Brown—later to have Brown University named for him—and Abraham Whipple—an ancestor, I believe, of Ms. Whipple McDougall—disguised themselves and boarded longboats in the night and rowed the 6 miles from Providence down the bay to the Gaspee. There, they surrounded the boat, and Brown called on Lieutenant Dudingston to surrender his ship.

The lieutenant refused and ordered his men to fire on anyone who tried to board and warned the Rhode Islanders of that threat. Well, the Rhode Islanders were having none of that. They stormed the Gaspee in the dark, and a melee ensued. Shots were fired. Swords clashed. In the struggle, Dudingston was shot and wounded by a musket ball—the first blood there of conflict between the Colonies and the Crown; the first blood, one could say, of the American Revolution drawn right there off Pawtuxet Cove.

The struggle ended with the Rhode Islanders in control of the vessel. Brown and Whipple's men ferried the British crew safely to shore, sought medical treatment for Lieutenant Dudingston, and then returned to the abandoned Gaspee to make sure it never carried a Rhode Islander again. To get rid of it for good, they set it on fire and retreated from the boat to watch it burn and burn until the fire reached the powder magazines and, when the fire reached the powder magazines, explode into the Narragansett Bay night, blowing the remainder of the Gaspee to smithereens and leaving it all to burn to the waterline.

Today, we Rhode Islanders call the site of these events Gaspee Point. Every year in early June, we celebrate the spirit of Rhode Island defiance that blossomed that day in Narragansett Bay 249 years ago. We will walk a parade in honor of Gaspee Day this weekend, and we will always remember the Gaspee raid, how it preceded by over a year the Boston Tea Party, and how, while those noble Bostonians pushed tea bags off of British ships into Boston Harbor, we blew the boat up.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Florida.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE PULSE NIGHTCLUB SHOOTING

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, nearly 5 years ago, our State, Nation, the city of Orlando, and Hispanic and LGBTQ communities were attacked, and 49 innocent and beautiful lives were lost. It was an evil act—an act of terrorism—designed to divide us as a nation and strike fear in our hearts and minds but instead we came together; we supported each other; and we persevered. We proved to the world what we in Florida already knew: Floridians are resilient.

The days I spent in Orlando following the shooting will always be with me. I talked to many parents who lost their children. I went to funerals and wakes. And I sat in hospital rooms. As a father

and grandfather, it was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do. It was heartbreaking.

But in this horribly dark time, the selfless courage of so many, from community members to law enforcement, to healthcare workers, provided a sense of hope. This incredible strength, love, and bravery lifted up Orlando and the State of Florida and helped us begin to rebuild.

This week, on the fifth anniversary of this unthinkable tragedy, the State of Florida comes together to honor the lives lost too soon. And we vow to always stand up and fight against evil and hatred in this world.

Now I yield the floor to my colleague from Florida, Senator RUBIO.

Mr. RUBIO. Most Americans remember that horrifying day 5 years ago. I certainly do. I remember it was a morning, and I started getting text messages that something horrifying had happened in our home State. As we turned on the news, we could see that it already had been the deadliest attack on American soil since September 11 of 2001.

And the full horror of that day, of that night, came into focus, as I remember jumping in my truck and driving 3 hours to be on the scene. And it would be a few more days, or a few more hours, before we learned that it was an attack that was inspired by an ideology of hatred by an individual inspired by—who had pledged allegiance to a foreign terrorist organization, and in that context appeared there on that evening. It was an evening of tragedy.

It was, as Senator SCOTT mentioned, Latin night at the Pulse nightclub. This was a well-known nightclub in the LGBTQ community in Central Florida. And one would think no one should ever be—the last thing someone is worried about when they go out for a night with their friends is that they are going to be attacked by a radical jihadist terrorist in the United States.

We had seen similar attacks in London and France. And the realization that that could happen in Florida, just down the street from a small business furniture store whose owners I had gotten to know shook everyone, shook me.

Like most terrorist attacks, it sought not only to bring death but division and fear, to terrorize; and, clearly, there is a tremendous amount of pain that 5 years later is still there.

But from it, what also occurred was that it brought Floridians together, particularly those in Central Florida—first, hand in hand to grieve and then to preserve the memory of those whose lives were lost. The outpouring of love and support came not only from Florida but from Americans from all across the United States who shared in our grief and drew inspiration from the State's resilience.

Five years later, the process of mourning continues. The process of remembrance continues, but so, too, is Orlando as united as it was 5 years ago. It is a reminder to us that even with